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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 000713

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/21/2016

TAGS: PGOV PINS PTER PHUM PE

SUBJECT: REPORTS CHAVEZ BUYS VOTES FOR HUMALA ROIL PRESS,
REMAIN UNSUBSTANTIATED

REF: A. LIMA 86

1B. LIMA 55

Classified By: Poloff David Brooks. Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

Summary:

11. (C) Charges that Hugo Chavez is offering legal residency to expat Peruvians in Venezuela if they vote for Humala roiled the press over the weekend (2/19). Candidates have split on the issue, with Lourdes Flores Nano calling the accusations potentially serious and Alan Garcia dismissing them. Peru's left-leaning Ambassador to Caracas, Carlos Urrutia, is reprising the role he played in early January, when he denied the significance of President Hugo Chavez' blatant attempt to influence Peruvian politics by endorsing Ollanta Humala (Refs A, B). Chavista organizations are trying to cast this as a populist, voter-participation issue by filing suit against the GOP with the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, charging the GOP with neglect of its citizens in Venezuela. The timing of the suit's filing (1/30) suggests premeditation. End Summary.

Is Hugo Trading Citizenship for Humala Votes?

12. (U) Various major Peruvian dailies broke the story on 2/19/06 that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez' government was working with Peruvians in Venezuela who support Humala to offer legal residency to Peruvian illegal aliens in that country in return for a promise that they would vote for ultra-nationalist, anti-system candidate Ollanta Humala in the upcoming Peruvian presidential elections. The author of the charges, so far unsubstantiated, was Enrique Naime, head of electoral issues for the opposition Christian Democratic Party of Venezuela (COPEI). (Note: One local source here reports that Naime has been sued in Venezuela for making false charges against other persons. End Note.)

13. (C) The candidates split in reaction to the news. Leading candidate Lourdes Flores warned that the charges, if proven, would constitute a "grave interference" in Peru's political process. Third place candidate Alan Garcia discounted the threat, stating that there were not enough possible Peruvian voters in Venezuela to tip the election. Likewise, Peruvian Ambassador to Venezuela Carlos Urrutia discounted the importance of any such effort, noting that the voter rolls in Peru are closed, in any case. (Comment: This

is the second time that Urrutia has minimized possible Venezuela interference in Peruvian affairs. In early January, the GOP recalled Urrutia from Caracas after Hugo Chavez' clear endorsement of Ollanta Humala during a ceremony Chavez hosted for Evo Morales in Caracas. Upon arriving in Lima, Urrutia minimized Chavez' action, stating that Peru "was not worried" about Chavez' actions. Highly placed GOP sources have told us that Urrutia is a confirmed leftist and feels very close to Chavez' movement. End Comment.)

Pending Protest in Caracas

¶4. (C) The announcement that a coalition of Chavez and Humala supporters in Venezuela composed of three organizations -- an allegedly pro-Human Rights NGO the Fifth Commandment, Bolivarian League of Emancipation (President: Monica Demestoy), and the Peruvian Nationalist Movement (President: Maximo Glocos) -- would stage a protest on Wednesday 2/22 in Caracas on behalf of the allegedly 350,000 Peruvians living in Venezuela, whom the coalition says are being effectively disenfranchised by GOP neglect added an element that may give this story more longevity.

Venezuelan NGO Uses Human Rights to Attack GOP

¶5. (U) The NGO Fifth Commandment filed 21-page complaint dated 1/30/06 with the Interamerican Commission of Human Rights against the GOP. The complaint mixes human rights charges against ex-President Fujimori and his advisor Vladimirmo Montesinos (both are blamed for driving Peruvians to Venezuela) with charges against President Toledo for negligence in regard to expatriate Peruvians in Venezuela. Specifically, the complaint states that the GOP has made it too difficult for Peruvians to obtain citizenship documents, and so, therefore, they cannot regularize their status in Venezuela. Fifth Commandment is demanding that the GOP pay each of the alleged 350,000 Peruvian expats in Venezuela a restitution of USD 10,000 each. (The full text of the Fifth Commandment's charges against the GOP are available at the movement's website, <http://mipagina.cantv.net/quintamandamiento/>.)

¶6. (C) Comment: While Naime has yet to produce proof of his accusations, the timing of Fifth Commandment's brief suggests premeditation in this effort to underline the alleged plight of disenfranchised Peruvians in Venezuela, a skillful maneuver that re-frames the question from intervention to one of democratic participation. Such a charge is clearly intended to mar the GOP's so far solid efforts, as the result of an explicit commitment by President Toledo, to run a clean election and manage a smooth democratic transition. This also distracts the public from concentrating on problems in Ollanta Humala's campaign or the human rights charges that continue to dog him. End Comment.

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